



# BACI E-NEWS

Building Active Communities Initiative

DECEMBER 2013

## Happy New Year!

2013 was a productive year for the Building Active Communities Initiative! Here are a few of the things we have accomplished together:

- BACI staff and advisors developed a BACI Workbook, Resource Guide, and two-day Action Institute. Based on evaluation and input from six pilot communities we have revised these resources for 2014.
- BACI staff and advisors developed the BACI Webinar Series and presented four webinars in 2013. Recordings and PowerPoint presentations are available at <http://healthinfo.montana.edu/RHI%20Webinars.html>. More webinars are planned for 2014.
- BACI staff presented at the 2013 Montana Mayors and City Managers Forum, the Montana Bike Walk Summit and the Montana Public Health Association conference.
- Eighteen participants from six pilot communities attended a two-day Action Institute with national presenter and facilitator Mark Fenton and are working to reach their goals (see 2013 Recap below).
- BACI staff served on the 2013 Montana Bike Walk Summit conference planning committee. Over 100 participants from 22 Montana cities attended the first annual Summit. For information on the 2014 Bike Walk Montana Summit please go to [www.bikewalkmontana.org](http://www.bikewalkmontana.org). *(continued on page 2)*



Main Street in Lewistown



## Tunnel to Health

A crowd of Helena elementary school students waved Bike Walk Helena signs and cheered "Cut the rope! Cut the rope!" as Helena Mayor Jim Smith cut the ribbon for a new bicycle/pedestrian tunnel under Interstate 15. The tunnel was built with funding from the Montana Department of Transportation and Federal Highways Administration.



Communities  
Transforming

To make healthy living easier

## 2013 Re-cap (continued)

- In September participants from nine Montana communities (including two BACI communities and BACI staff) attended the Winning Campaigns training in Helena presented by the Alliance for Walking and Biking.



Winning Campaigns Training, Helena

- The Helena City Commission adopted Engineering Standards that include a Complete Streets checklist, and passed subdivision regulations that require sidewalks in a new development to be installed at the same time as streets, curbs and gutters. This change will ensure that a partially developed subdivision has a complete sidewalk network. Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department/BACI staff provided education to stakeholders on both issues.



Polson streetscape project

- Six additional communities applied and were accepted to attend the 2014 BACI Action Institute. Teams of up to five people from Anaconda-Deer Lodge, Belgrade, Dillon, Hamilton, Polson, and Whitefish will come to Bozeman in March of 2014 to attend the two-day training and receive a multitude of resources and technical assistance to help them accomplish their goals.

## 2014 Action Institute

We are looking forward to the 2014 Action Institute which will take place in Bozeman, MT, March 18-20. Congratulations to the six communities that applied and were chosen to attend this workshop and receive ongoing technical assistance through September 2016: Anaconda-Deer Lodge, Belgrade, Dillon, Hamilton, Polson, and Whitefish.



Downtown Bozeman

## Action Shots

**Butte-Silver Bow** Environmental issues, economic decline, topography, and car-centered culture are all issues that have been barriers in the past for Butte to focus on creating safer, more accessible and more connected streets for walking and biking. Butte has done a great job with their recreational trail system but now needs to create a complete walk/bike network by connecting these assets to their street system. **Action:** The Butte BACI team is reaching out to a wide variety of community partners to ensure they are all working together to achieve the same goal of creating a more walkable, bikeable and accessible Butte. They are gearing up to work on updating Butte's Transportation Plan to make sure walking, biking, and accessibility are at the forefront of this important policy.

**Glendive** The City of Glendive sits on the western edge of the Bakken-impacted area. As such, they are keenly aware of what's happening in Sidney and other communities and are eager to avoid many of the pitfalls associated with rapid growth and insufficient planning. **Action:** BACI technical assistance came along at an opportune time for Glendive/Dawson County. With encouragement and training, a broad spectrum of community leaders are working together to contribute to Glendive's plans, policies and infrastructure. Most recently Building Active Glendive (BAG), the team formed after the Action Institute, reviewed the existing Walking and Biking Master Plan and learned the paths are plotted incorrectly. BAG is formulating suggestions for revisions. They are also working to include complete streets language into their Growth Policy Update.

**Great Falls** Members of the Great Falls Action Team were stymied in earlier efforts to pass a local Complete Streets policy. They looked to other ways of formalizing the community's intentions to build a more active community. **Action:** Members of the Great Falls Action Team, which includes two City Commissioners, supported the adoption of a Growth Policy with strong policy statements prioritizing active transportation infrastructure and development. The Cascade City-County Health Department partnered with the Montana Public Health Association to create a visual preferences survey of non-motorized transportation infrastructure and then has worked with the Great Falls Planning and Community Development Department and neighborhood associations to distribute the survey as a public engagement and education strategy.

**Kalispell** The City of Kalispell was built over multiple decades to several different engineering standards. The result is similar to most towns in Montana: many residential and commercial neighborhoods were built without sidewalks. **Action:** After learning how to conduct a "walking audit" at the Action Institute, the City's Parks and Recreation Department led a walking audit in July that captured the attention of local media outlets. Next, they teamed up with the Public Works and Planning Departments to draft a map showing sidewalk coverage in Kalispell's urban core. The next steps will include prioritizing areas for sidewalk construction, and re-evaluating Kalispell's sidewalk construction and replacement program.

**Lewistown** Downtown Lewistown has suffered some economic decline in recent years and city leaders are working hard to implement Lewistown's Downtown Plan which was created several years earlier. Lewistown's Main Street is part of a state highway and it will be important to calm traffic in order to support more pedestrian activity. Also, the entrance corridor leading to Main Street does not have sidewalks. **Action:** The Lewistown BACI team is working to reach out to community partners to incorporate walkability into the downtown revitalization efforts. They are also working with the Montana Department of Transportation to ensure a sidewalk and curb-extension project in their downtown and entrance corridor is implemented in the most advantageous way to encourage more walking and biking. Next they will gear up to tackle an update to their Growth Policy to ensure walking, biking and accessibility are key elements in this policy update.

**Sidney** City and County stakeholders in Sidney are scrambling to keep up with, much less get ahead of, booming construction – including new streets – to accommodate their growing population. **Action:** A subcommittee of Active Richland County has amassed complete streets policies from across Montana and the nation and is drafting a policy specific to their municipality. They have started a PowerPoint presentation to educate community members and are developing a timeline to submit the policy to the city council for review.

# Our Team

## **Building Active Community Initiative Staff:**

Ben Brouwer, Health Educator—Built Environment, Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department  
Cathy Costakis, Senior Consultant—Built Environment, Montana State University, Office of Rural Health  
Laura Holmlund, Built Environment Coordinator, RiverStone Health  
Karen Lane, Prevention Program Manager, Lewis and Clark City-County Health Department

## **Building Active Community Initiative Advisors:**

Melinda Barnes, Executive Director, Bike Walk Montana  
Joe Gilpin, Principal, Alta Planning + Design  
Jerry Grebenc, Project Manager, Future West  
Hillary Hanson, Deputy Health Officer, Flathead City-County Health Department  
Paul Lachapelle, Associate Professor and Community Development Extension Specialist, Montana State University  
Ryan Leland, City Engineer, City of Helena  
Taylor Lonsdale, Research Engineer, Western Transportation Institute.  
Roger Millar, Vice President, Smart Growth America  
Allison Mouch, Community Planning Bureau Chief, Montana Department of Commerce  
Meg Traci, Research Associate Professor, University of Montana Rural Institute on Disabilities  
Beth Shumate, Trails Program Manager, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Mandi Zanto, Nutrition and Physical Activity Program Manager, Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services

## **Get in touch:**

For more information about the Community Transformation Grant or the Montana Building Active Communities Initiative please contact Cathy Costakis at [costakis@montana.edu](mailto:costakis@montana.edu), (406) 994-5734 or Mandi Zanto at [mzanto@mt.gov](mailto:mzanto@mt.gov), (406) 444-7373.

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The BACI project is supported by a Community Transformation Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The goal of BACI is to create or enhance community environments so that people of all ages, abilities and income levels can safely walk, bike or take public transportation to places they need to go.



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